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A TRIBUTE

TO AMERICA

The U.S.A. at War as Seen through Belgian Eyes

Ьу

GEORGES THEUNIS

Belgian Ambassador at Large to the U.S.A. (1939-1944)

Belgian

An address delivered on April 30, 1945 by Georges Theunis, Minister of State, former Prime-Minister, former Belgian Ambassador at Large to the United States of America, at the Belgian-American Educational Foundation, Brussels, Belgium.

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# EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Brussels, May 5, 1945.

My dear Mr. Minister:

May I on behalf of the people of the United States and my Government express thanks and appreciation for your masterly presentation of the facts of America's participation in the war. I feel occasionally that our war effort is too little known. You certainly made up this deficiency.

May I also tell you how deeply touched I was by your tribute to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. I wish that all of my fellow countrymen in the United States could have heard it.

Sincerely yours, (s) C. Sawyer

His Excellency Monsieur Georges Theunis 2, rue des Deux Eglises, Bruxelles.



Georges Theunis

## A TRIBUTE TO AMERICA

The U.S.A. at War as Seen through Belgian Eyes

When I was asked to give a talk on "America at War," I received that request with two conflicting feelings.

On the one hand, the magnitude and complexity of the subject scared me. It offered so many aspects that it appeared to me extremely difficult to outline, be it only its principal features, without overtaxing the patience of my audience.

However, it happens that following several previous visits to the United States, I recently spent five years over there—from the end of October 1939 to September 10, 1944. The Belgian Government sent me to the United States when the war was entering its first phase, in the capacity of an Ambassador at Large "on a Special Mission." By a curious but not uncommon misnomer, the word "special" in my case referred to a number of ill-specified duties. These brought me into contact with many aspects of American life. From that protracted stay I retain a feeling of deep gratitude towards the United States: personal gratitude for the cordial and friendly reception I received, and gratitude as a Belgian citizen towards the American nation whose homeland lies so far from Europe and her problems, but who none the less has given much of the precious blood of its soldiers in order to liberate our people and other victims of German aggression, and who at the same time, and in the same cause, is sacrificing a large portion of its resources.

The feeling of gratitude prevailed. Despite the difficulties of the undertaking, I shall endeavor to give you a brief description of the United States of America in this war.

A multitude of races live and mingle in that vast area. Yet they form one people of 132 million inhabitants, all deeply attached to the Star Spangled Banner and to a high national ideal. Diversity of countries of origin does not impair their unity. According to the 1940 census, as summarized in the World Almanac, 11 million inhabitants of the United States were foreign born. American citizens born in the States of parents immigrated from Europe are still more numerous. Yet, with few exceptions—which you would expect to find particularly among persons of German descent—the entire population has nobly done its duty in this war. If you glance over the casualty lists published daily in

the United States, you will notice beside Anglo-Saxon names, many that point manifestly to German, Russian, Czechoslovakian, Italian, Greek, French, or other extraction. All those young men have become thoroughly American, and have displayed with admirable simplicity an equal courage for their common country.

## 1

## Public Opinion in the United States in October 1939

Although forewarned before I left Europe, through dispatches and press articles, I was surprised, and even alarmed, to note on my arrival in the United States how little inclined American public opinion was

to contemplate a participation in the European war.

American intervention in World War I-in 1917-had left few happy memories over there. Spurred by President Wilson and shocked by repeated outrages at the hands of imperial Germany, the American nation had accomplished a great war effort, spent many billion dollars, and burdened itself with a heavy public debt. Loss of life had been relatively small in comparison to the population, but the economic system of the country was seriously disrupted, and the effects of that disorder were felt for many years. Following a period of deceptive prosperity brought about by war expenditure and an abnormal demand for American supplies from Europe, an acute depression, which deepened up to 1932, had called for the New Deal. Most people resented the action taken by America's former Allies-or rather Associates-of 1917-1918, in suspending payments on their war debts. They did not realize that this action was largely rendered necessary through the United States closing its frontiers to the imports of European goods. The dominant impression was, perhaps with some justification, that Europe had shown little gratitude for the sacrifices made by the United States, although these had in fact ensured Victory in 1918. Moreover, Americans in general-and I may say notably the most intellectual and estimable-are at heart profoundly peace-loving. German propaganda had very ably exploited that feeling. It developed immediately after the Armistice of 1918, disguising the true cause of World War I, namely German imperialism, which had destroyed 25 million human lives. Its object was to justify Germany as she tore up gradually almost every page of the Versailles Treaty, and furthermore, to extol the benefits of the Nazi regime, the order and prosperity it had restored to the fatherland. However mendacious it found wide credence, particularly among the many people of German descent immigrated into the United States at

the end of the 19th Century or the beginning of the 20th. There can be no doubt that it succeeded in spreading the belief that Germany was not guilty of aggression in 1914. Yet, it would have sufficed to peruse the literature published in Germany before her downfall of 1918 in order to see that so long as she appeared victorious the Germans were loudly boasting of the advantages which their invasions were reaping.

Following her endeavors to shift the burden of responsibility for the war, Germany broached another theme: the injustice of the reparations imposed upon her, and the havor they were causing her innocent people. She was going through an economic crisis which was due, so she alleged, exclusively to the Franco-English insistence on reparations. Yet, the amount which was, in theory, demanded from her was only a fraction of the actual cost of the war.

The war of 1914-1918 had cost the Allies at least 24 billion gold pounds sterling: President Wilson even advanced an estimate of 31 billions. The Allies were claiming only one-fourth or one-fifth of that sum. As a matter of fact, Germany paid 153 million pounds sterling in reparations, after having borrowed from her creditors more than 1,500 million. She then defaulted.

With a similar tenacity, Germany denied the atrocities of which she had been guilty, and which it is unnecessary to recall to a Belgian audience.

From 1940 onward, and even after Pearl Harbor, the Germans systematically endeavored to give out that the horrible accounts concerning Breendonk, Karkhoff, etc., were mere propaganda. I remember that in 1943 a Detroit paper made an inquiry in the streets of that city. A correspondent questioned passers-by at random, asking them whether they believed the stories of German atrocities. Nine out of ten replied that they did not believe them, adding "that is sheer propaganda."

Today, the testimonies of American soldiers and official statements on conditions found in concentration camps, and the horrible photos published in the press, have brought about a change of sentiment. The truth is now known to be far worse than all that had been said.

Do not be surprised, do not be indignant at the apparent credulity of the citizens of Detroit who replied to the poll I mentioned. They had not experienced two invasions as we had, and were simply unable to imagine that human beings could be guilty of such bestial atrocities.

Indeed, I am afraid that some illusions still exist as to the true nature of the activities of certain German political refugees. In a number of instances those men, although victims of the Hitler regime, prove to have remained Germans above all. The future democratic Germany of which they speak, and which is to rise from the present war, is hardly distinguishable from the Greater Germany of the Master Race.

You should also bear in mind that at that time many Americans, particularly on the West Coast and in the Middle West, were already conscious of the threat of Japanese imperialism. This aimed at dominion over the entire Far East, and made no secret of its ambitions, in regard not only to China, which was already invaded, but also to India, the Dutch Colonies and the Philippines—the largest archipelago nearest to the Nippon Islands. In those American circles there was a fear of war with Japan, sooner or later, and a feeling that it would be unwise to embark on a war in Europe in the face of that menace.

Furthermore, in extreme leftist circles, the war declared in 1939 was looked upon as a specifically capitalistic war.

Finally, aware of its strength, its industrial capacity, and its distance from the theaters of war, Northern America was under the impression that it would not be exposed to any serious danger in the event of a Nazi German victory. However, the terrific successes of the formidable German war machine in the Netherlands, Belgium and France opened American eyes.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt was never deceived by German hypocrisy. When many in Europe, even among the most eminent, considered that no war was imminent, the President sensed the danger. With a surprising and admirable vision he knew the menace was real. But it was an arduous task to make the public realize the dreadful truth, especially since the sacrifices and hardships which entry into the war would involve were readily visualized.

Already in 1937 the President had uttered a condemnation of totalitarian governments and recommended to the world that they be boycotted. He foresaw the ills which their regime would soon bring to the world and never ceased from that time on, and especially after the Nazi aggression had commenced, to raise his voice in protest. By persuasion, not by pressure, he succeeded in convincing his people that the great American nation itself could not remain isolated and indifferent to the drama that was taking place in Europe. He wished the American people to understand their government's point of view, and freely concur with it.

Besides his official addresses to Congress, or on the radio, the President remained in close touch with public opinion through the practice of press conferences. Twice a week he received in his spacious office one

or two hundred specially accredited newspaper correspondents for informal talks. In these, the President commented on recent events and plans for the future, explaining a given situation or problem, and expressing his opinion. Sometimes his views were given for his hearers only, and not for publication. In America, and particularly at the White House, when you say to a journalist "This is off the record," you may be assured that your confidence will not be abused.

The journalists were permitted to put questions, and the President replied when he considered it proper to do so or evaded the question with great skill and good humor. Some of his quips are still famous. You never read in the papers after a press conference "the President said this or that," but rather "a spokesman of the White House has declared." Everyone knew what that meant.

#### 1 1 1

I need not recall the anxieties of the second half of the year 1940. At that critical moment England stood alone, determined heroically and indomitably to face the Nazis. Her magnificent war chief—Winston Churchill—without concealing the difficulties, sufferings and sacrifices she would be called upon to bear, had resolved to pursue the fight to a finish.

In September 1940, the President succeeded in bringing a reluctant American Congress to pass an Act instituting compulsory military service. In the following November he was reelected President of the United States for a third term. To anyone who knows how sacred was the tradition according to which no president should serve more than two terms, that reelection indicated an almost revolutionary change in American conceptions. The people understood that the President who had been successful in overcoming the economic crisis in 1933, and been the first to visualize the danger of Hitlerism to which he incessantly drew attention, was the man to continue to lead the nation through the storm.

In March 1941 he succeeded in securing the passage of the Lend-Lease Act, which enabled the United States to supply first Britain, then the other Allies, with enormous quantities of commodities for which it would have been impossible to make payment in gold. This added a new link to the chain of defensive measures against the Nazi menace.

Then came another shock: Germany and Romania invaded Russia without declaring war, regardless of a non-aggression treaty less than two years old. A few months of unprecedented German successes followed, while the Japanese were victoriously advancing in China. The Japanese leaders exulted. President Roosevelt appealed direct to Emperor Hirohito, hoping to avert a conflict in the Pacific. At the very moment when the Japanese Ambassador called at the State Department to discuss the situation, the Nippon fleet and air force treacherously attacked the great American base at Hawaii, simultaneously assailing the Philippines and other Islands of the Pacific under American rule.

The attack upon Pearl Harbor put the American Pacific fleet out of action for quite a time. Four days after the Japanese aggression,

Germany and Italy declared war on the United States.

Blinded by their respective successes in China and in Russia, the two major Axis powers looked upon themselves as masters of the world. They were convinced that the United States, ill-prepared for war, would be unable to resist them, less still to tear victory from German hands in Europe.

I find it difficult to describe American feelings in the hours that followed Pearl Harbor: fury mingled with humiliation, and with not unfounded anxiety. Had the Japanese known the extent of their success, they might have been able to land at Hawaii, which would have pro-

longed the war.

As I said just now, American opinion was divided in 1939. It remained so until Pearl Harbor. "Isolationist," or if you prefer, anti-interventionist movements had developed. Such was that of a group which called itself "America First," who claimed that the primary interest of the United States was to keep out of the war. It had strong partisans in the Republican Party and the full support of the Hearst press and the anti-British Chicago Tribune, a paper very influential in the Middle West. Furthermore, it found an advocate in a man who enjoyed great popularity in the United States—Colonel Lindbergh—the hero of the first transatlantic flight. Within a few hours after the assault on Pearl Harbor, all this opposition had vanished.

True, war was generally accepted with resignation, but the people were practically unanimous: there was nothing to do but fight and win. Nobody doubted that victory would ultimately be achieved, yet many Americans wondered whether it would be worth the sacrifices. The former isolationists, the die-hard opponents of Roosevelt, continued to foster doubts and prejudices. These expressed themselves in a measure of resistance to, or at least criticism of, important steps which the country was obliged to take in order to adapt its life to war conditions, but which

unavoidably disturbed established habits.

The United States had begun in 1940 to manufacture war materials and munitions for itself and for Britain. After Pearl Harbor, instead of devoting only a part of its activities to those manufactures, it profoundly altered its habitual pursuits in order to increase its industrial war productions to the utmost.

As regards the manufacture of war material, it was practically starting from scratch. The Begian Government for instance had been trying since 1939 to acquire a small quantity of rifle cartridge powder; not a ton was obtainable from the United States, where none of this material existed save what remained of the 1918 inventories.

The American Air Force in 1940 was insignificant as compared to that of Germany. Only a few hundred planes a month were being built. The number of ships leaving the shipyards was far from compensating shipping losses. I need hardly say that the figures published concerning vessels sunk revealed only part of the damage sustained, since they did not include ships put out of commission. Those who know the miracles performed by American ship-building are aware that it requires less work and time to manufacture a new craft than to repair one that has been damaged and has taken reruge in some port.

The Army numbered only a few thousand men scattered in garrisons all over the country, or in Panama, the Philippines or Alaska. The planes at the disposal of the Air Force were good but few. Much of the military equipment dated back to 1918. In recent manoeuvres newly created units were equipped with dummy guns consisting of stove pipes on trucks, and gasoline trucks simulating dummy tanks.

The first stages of the fight in 1941 and 1942 brought many unpleasant and even disastrous surprises. However, the rapid Japanese successes in Malaya, Burma and the Dutch Colonies were unable to shake the confidence of the American people in final victory despite the unavoidable loss of the Philippines. As a matter of fact, at the time, the war was going badly; but America refused to admit it. It was at that time that the submarine warfare was most dangerous, and indeed imperilled the flow of supplies to Britain and Russia, and consequently Victory itself.

Those were truly anxious days. Axis forces were at the gates of Egypt; the Germans had taken the Sebastopol stronghold; and a few weeks later the United States lost three of its major battleships in a naval engagement near an island which has become famous: Guadalcanal. But the end of 1942 witnessed the beginning of reverses for the Axis Powers. Disembarkation in North Africa was soon followed by the relief of besieged Stalingrad.

### D DAY

In 1943 already there was much talk in the United States of establishing a second front in Western Europe. The disembarkation in Italy was looked upon as merely in the nature of a major diversion. Our Russian Allies were of course anxiously awaiting that intervention to start their big offensive action that would ultimately lead to Berlin. But preparations for that formidable operation perforce required time.

In June 1944, despite the secrecy enveloping official decisions, feelings had grown tense. Public opinion had been gradually prepared to the idea that heavy loss of life would be involved in the assault on the Atlantic Wall, which German propaganda had loudly proclaimed to be impregnable. The first dispatches announcing the disembarkation in Normandy brought the excitement to a peak. "Commercials" which hold a large place in American broadcasts were suppressed in order to make room for war news. Between listening to or reading dispatches, people went to church. Many churches of all denominations remained open throughout the day, and prayers went up incessantly for the victory of the Allied Arms. One of the New York department stores closed, notices on its show windows announcing that it suspended its ordinary operations because it realized that its staff and customers would wish to devote that day to prayer and thoughts of their dear ones and friends fighting for the great cause.

#### 1 1 1

### Modern Tactics

We all have been able to admire the splendid, and I may say, unprecedented manner in which warfare has been conducted during the past months in Europe.

May I be permitted in that connection a personal remark. As an Officer from 1889 to 1897 and again from 1914 to 1919, and belonging to a family of soldiers—my father was a general, one of my grandfathers served under Napoleon, the other in 1830—I have always been particularly interested in military operations. In 1914-18 already, but even more so during the recent campaigns, I was struck by the changes in tactics from the teachings I had received at the Military Academy.

You may remember that in 1914 the Allied generals were accused of adhering unwisely to the principles and methods of 1870. The Allied leaders of 1940 were similarly accused of fighting in the manner of 1918, basing themselves on the preceding war as though nothing had

changed. On the other hand, the Germans appeared to have adapted their tactics to new weapons and equipment.

Yet this time the Allied generals—American and British—have succeeded in availing themselves to the utmost of the weapons and equipment placed at their disposal. Under the supreme command of General Eisenhower, we have seen the motorized forces of Patton and Bradley speed through Germany with what appeared an unwieldy equipment, much in the manner of Murat's light cavalry in the Napoleonic campaigns. Mobile armies have carried on a war of rapid movements. Our British Allies, under the leadership of Montgomery, practised the same methods with equal success. It is due to those daring and forceful tactics that our country was delivered in September last with a minimum of damage. How different from the slow advances of a few miles or even a few hundred yards at a time which the war communiqués so proudly announced in 1915-1916 and 1917.

From Normandy to Brussels, the advance proceeded with unhoped for speed; but who, even among the most optimistic, could have foreseen that four months after von Runstedt's last attack, the Allied Armies would be at Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg, Leipzig, Vienna, Nuremberg and Munich. Had we been told in June 1944, or even last December, that by Easter 1945 the Allied Forces would reach the Rhine and the Polish-German frontier, we would have considered that rate of progress highly satisfactory.

It is only natural that the people in Europe should have their eyes fixed on the European theater of war. We are apt to forget that in addition to its gigantic war effort in Europe, the United States has been carrying on another war which requires equal exertions, though in a somewhat different form, in the Pacific Ocean.

To those of you who remained in Belgium throughout the Occupation, it may not be superfluous briefly to describe the magnitude of that campaign and the significance of the battles which led from Pearl Harbor to the conquest of Manila.

When General McArthur—a most popular war hero in the United States—obeyed in 1942 an order to leave the Island of Corrigedor, which faces Manila, he solemnly vowed that he would return. For quite a time it looked as though it would be impossible to keep that promise, when the Japanese occupied the entire Dutch Indies Archipelago and were threatening Australia. Yet McArthur, true to his word, returned victorious, and now it is he who is threatening Japan.

The battles off the Australian Coast, and the isolated raid on

Tokio by 12 light bombers, are today far surpassed. When you meet an American officer, or a private, whose shoulder bears the word Guadalcanal, you know that you are meeting a hero. Guadalcanal, an island of thick jungles and swamps, was the first outstanding example of the valor and tenacity of American fighting men in hand-to-hand grips, under terrible climatic conditions, with opponents more fanatical if possible than were even the Germans. At Guadalcanal the American Marines—all of them volunteers—earned everlasting glory; and there have been many Guadalcanals in the past two years.

To revert to the Philippines, the American Navy had first to be rebuilt, while the Pearl Harbor base, from whence the great counter-offensive against Japan was to be launched, was being developed. Then, it was necessary "to jump from island to island" as the Americans describe it, in order to approach first Australia and then the many bases established by Japan. This campaign extended not only southward, but also northward up to sub-polar regions in the Aleutian Islands where Japan had succeeded in taking a foothold: the Islands of Kiska and Attu, which we can hardly find on our maps. The Japanese foothold in that area was threatening Alaska, and consequently the Northern section of the American Pacific Coast.

Can you visualize what it means to disembark, as was done recently, 100,000 men with a corresponding equipment in an island of the Philippines more than 5000 miles from the American West Coast? It has been revealed of late that such a disembarkation required 1600 merchant vessels, of which many were "Liberty" or "Victory" ships of approximately 10,000 tons each, to say nothing of huge numbers of fighting craft and plane carriers to protect landing operations.

You have gathered from maps the results of the Pacific campaign. We are far from the day, in 1942, when a Japanese submarine—a single instance it is true—was able to bombard a factory on the California Coast.

Those operations are no less important than the Battle of Europe. War against the Axis powers is indivisible. The brunt of the war against Japan has hitherto been borne by the United States.

I need hardly say that I have no wish to minimize the splendid campaigns of the British, Indian and Chinese divisions in Burma, nor the valorous contributions brought by the Australians and New Zealanders. My purpose today is not to give you a history of the war but merely to stress a few facts in passing.

As I said a few moments ago, war turned an America in which—as in all free countries—public opinion was divided, into a single-minded America, unanimously bound to the will of its far-seeing President.

While the American Army was fighting heroically on distant fronts, the United States resolutely set itself to work. I shall now have to cite a number of figures and must apologize for doing so: there is no other means of giving you an idea of the magnitude of the American war effort.

In speaking of the United States, one is inclined to accept without surprise a string of ciphers following a digit, yet behind figures of tonnage and productions, be it in the United States or elsewhere, there are the same realities, namely: will power and exertion—intellectual work and manual labor. But the thing to admire most particularly is perhaps the prodigious effort of coordination and harmonization required to move increasingly huge volumes and masses of goods. When you listen to the statistics I am about to read, you will hear the distant rumbling of feverish activities in workshops, mines, and transportation systems, that vast accumulation of human energies, which is working methodically though tensely, at an unprecedented rhythm, in difficult circumstances, gladly sacrificing conveniences and pleasures in the interest of the war—that war which we rightly call a war of liberation, of our liberation.

The following figures will give you some idea of the extent to which America has mobilized her resources: In 1940 her Armed Forces totalled 700,000 men; in 1944 they comprised 11,900,000 men and 189,000 women. The number of workers in munition factories rose from 4,500,000 in 1940 to 10,300,000 in November 1943. The federal war agencies increased their staffs by 1,500,000. In 1929, a year of great prosperity, the United States numbered a record figure of 47,000,000 persons gainfully employed. Including armed forces their number has risen to 65,000,000.

Such an expansion in employment presupposes a successful solution of extremely difficult problems: the creation of entirely novel industries, the establishment of new works in areas or on sites unprepared to receive them, and the provision of adequate housing, even to the building of entire townships for 4,000,000 workers and their families. 9,000,000 persons all told were displaced and distributed among more than 1,000 settlements. Some of these were made up, in the initial stages, of motor trailers. A new city of 160,000 inhabitants was created near Portland, Oregon. The construction of houses for all that displaced population involved an outlay of \$6,000,000,000,000. Since June

1940, \$20,000,000,000 have been invested in new works or plant extensions.

## AVIATION

Impressive figures reflect the expansion of American plane construction. From July 1940 to September 1944 inclusive, 232,000 planes were built in the United States: 75,000 bombers, 70,000 fighters, the balance consisting of training or transport planes. Exclusive of units delivered to the Allies and losses in action or otherwise, America had 75,000 planes in commission on November 1, 1944, of which 23,000 were first line fighting planes. On that same date 2,400 units were on their way from the workshops to airfields. In the year 1944 alone, 96,522 planes were built, of which 35,052 bombers, and 39,220 fighters or patrol planes, for an aggregate value of \$13,000,000,000. Programs in course of accomplishment provide for the manufacture of 7,000 planes a month. This number is below previous records but, in fact, all preceding outputs are exceeded considering the increasing weight and power of the units produced.

That tremendous production could not have been achieved without a complete system for the manufacture of all its parts. Progress in each of the works was carefully checked, and whenever one of them showed a lag in production for several successive months its organization was entirely remodeled so as to avoid further delays.

Let us now turn to the successes of the American Air Forces on the fields of battle. With the aid of the RAF, they methodically bombed plane and munition factories, and oil refineries all over Germany. In the German occupied territorities the Luftwaffe was practically annihilated, a number of planes unable to take to the air for lack of fuel being destroyed on the ground.

In the Pacific zone American pilots put 20,000 Japanese planes out of action, and many other units were brought down by gun fire. Not content with destruction at that pace, General Nasted recently said: "We shall destroy their workshops, and if fleets of 1000 or more bombers are needed you may be sure we shall have them." The 20th Air Force has had them, and the papers report that the program is being fulfilled.

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## LEND-LEASE

The Lend-Lease agreements into which the United States has entered with its Allies, do not, as you know, place American money

at the disposal of the beneficiaries but rather enable them to obtain tanks, planes, guns, ships, foodstuffs and materials for their war effort. Being furnished for a specific purpose, those supplies may not be applied to any other. They must serve, directly or indirectly, to waging war against the common enemies.

The Lend-Lease Act was passed on March 11, 1941 after heated discussions. Public opinion was divided on its merits. Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau declared: "Unless the Bill goes through, England will have no choice but to cease to fight," On the fourth anniversary of the passing of the Bill, Mr. Crowley, Head of the Lend-Lease Administration, published some striking figures. In January last alone, the value of goods and equipment supplied by the United States to its Allies was 1,775 million dollars, bringing the total of Lend-Lease supplies up to that date to 36,557 million dollars, half of which consisted of arms and munitions. I need hardly say that, failing the facilities of Lend-Lease, it would have been absolutely impossible for the Allies to raise sufficient credits to pay for the supplies that make up the astronomic amount I just cited. Mr. Crowley could justly say in his report to the President that Lend-Lease has proved one of the most important contributions of the United States to the defense of the nations resisting the Axis.

Of course, the Allies on their side have given by way of "reverse lend-lease," in whatever manner they could, assistance to the United States, but they have been unable to supply more than a relatively small counterpart of what they received from the United States.

I am afraid of tiring you with too many figures, but let me mention

Under the Lend-Lease system, the British Empire has obtained 20,000 planes, of which 1,300 heavy bombers; 20,000 tanks and 320,000 trucks. Up to January last, supplies sent to the USSR comprised over 1,500,000 tons of rails; 1,300 locomotives; 9,000 railway cars; 12,000 fighting motor vehicles; 355,000 trucks; 3,200,000 tires and accessories; in all 15,774,000 tons of miscellaneous equipment.

By the end of June 1944, 16,000 planes had been sent to the Russians. I leave it to you to picture the problems involved, not only in the construction, but in the transportation of the material, say to Murmansk, through seas infested with U-boats, and along German-held coasts. The problem was similar for deliveries through the Persian Gulf; yet over that road alone 5,000,000 tons went to the USSR.

#### Shirs

The building of merchant ships in the United States was a matter of vital importance to the United States, especially at the time when the German U-boat warfare was at the height of its successes. Too little is generally known of the prodigious efforts thanks to which first the losses caused by that warfare were replaced, and then merchant shipping at the disposal of the Allies increased sufficiently to solve the arduous problems of war transportation to Europe, Africa and Asia.

Shipyards started to build 10,000 ton ships, on lines similar to those used elsewhere in building motor vehicles. All parts were standardized. The 9,300 different parts that entered into a Liberty Ship were prepared and assembled according to the technique that has rendered Detroit

famous.

A California shipyard achieved the time record of 4 days 15 hours and 25 minutes from the laying of the keel to the launching of a Liberty ship. While the vessel was gliding into the ocean, the keel of its successor was already laid. Before 1940, it would have taken six months to build a cargo vessel of that size.

Deliveries in 1943 alone totalled 1,896 merchant ships, aggregating a dead weight tonnage of over 19,000,000 tons. From the moment the program was first established following Pearl Harbor—on January 10, 1942—up to the end of 1944, 43,500,000 tons of shipping were delivered. The merchant marine operated under the control of the U. S. Maritime Commission, and was manned by almost 200,000 sailors. Simultaneously the shipyards of the Navy had turned out an unprecedented number of vessels: in 1944 alone they delivered 420 warships, 1,200 auxiliary and patrol ships, and more than 37,000 disembarkation craft. The total tonnage built by the Navy in 1944 reached 5½ million tons, or almost seven times more than in 1941. As a result, the American merchant marine is larger than all others combined.

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## OIL AND RUBBER

In modern warfare, oil for air-craft and motor vehicles of all kinds is of paramount importance. Without it there can be no motorized forces, no air forces. The United States therefore greatly increased its oil production as soon as it engaged in war. Until that time the output had never reached 3,500,000 barrels a day; by the end of 1944 the daily average was 4,800,000 barrels.

Oil transportation in the United States was another problem calling for a solution. In order to facilitate the conveyance of oil and avoid the dangers of submarines, a pipeline several thousand miles long was built from Texas to the Atlantic Coast.

Oil was used, not only as motor fuel, but also in the manufacture of synthetic rubber. The Japanese having invaded the areas—Malaya and Indo-China—from which before the war go p.c. of the world supply of natural rubber was derived, the United States was faced with the necessity of producing rapidly 1,000,000 tons of synthetic rubber per annum for its military and essential civilian requirements, while drastically reducing the quantities of rubber at the disposal of the public at large.

The output of synthetic rubber rose from 24,000 tons in 1942, to 234,000 in 1943, and 763,255 tons in 1944. It is expected to reach 1,000,000 tons in 1945, and 1,200,000 tons in 1946, which is substantially more than the consumption of natural rubber before the war.

Thanks to stocks prudently accumulated before the outbreak of hostilities, 96 p. c. of the United States rubber consumption could be covered by means of natural rubber. In 1945, that proportion will be reduced to 15 per cent, 700 million dollars having been spent on the construction of suitable plants for the manufacture of the synthetic commodity.

Such figures may appear hardly credible, but Lieutenant-General Somervell, commanding the U. S. Army Service Forces, stated on November 19, 1944, that on the European theater of war alone the American armies were using up 5,000 tires a day, at a moment when the Allied Armies were at a standstill. You can imagine what the consumption has been in the period of swift movements which we witnessed with such admiration.

There has also been a problem of aluminum; but I must put a limit to my remarks.

## Manufacture of War Material

Here we enter a field where for obvious reasons more has been done than could be told. Yet, it is public knowledge that the utmost has been accomplished. The following two examples may serve as an illustration.

In the year 1944 alone, 17,685 tanks and some 24,000 armored cars, plus 10,000 gun tractors were built, while more than 6,700 million dollars were spent on munitions. In 1945, expenditure on similar

supplies and ships is expected to exceed 64 billion dollars. But what may appear no less remarkable than those stupendous figures of production is what an economist would term the problem of distribution.

On October 13th last, Mr. Robert Patterson, Under-Secretary of War, revealed a few figures. General Eisenhower's Forces, he said, were consuming in 10 days of firing, the output of 35 days. During the month of November on the West European front they fired 6 million shells and 2,000 mortar missiles. The artillery of the First Army alone shot 300,000 rounds of 105 m.m. howitzer shells in the siege of Aachen. By that time more than 375,000 tons of ammunition had been consumed in the European campaign.

"If the operations of General Eisenhower," Mr. Patterson went on to say, "are to continue adequately, it will be necessary to consume 4,000 to 5,000 lbs. of ammunition a minute, making at the rate of 24 hours per diem, a daily consumption of 3,600 tons."

On all other theaters of operations, requirements of transport equipment are even greater.

To sum up my remarks on the American war output, let me quote some figures cited on March 1st last by Mr. William Batt, Vice Chairman of the United States War Production Board:

"We have produced, he said (in round figures): 247,000 planes; 57,000 ships; 2,422,000 machine guns; 5,942,000 rifles; 5,164,000 shotguns; 1,927,000 sub-machine guns; 75,000 tanks; 130,000 armored cars and gun tractors; 55,000 guns; 11,000 2-1/2 ton trucks; 659,000 pickups; 37,198,000,000 small caliber cartridges; 2,928,000 tons of shells for land artillery; 4,130,000 tons of airplane shells; and 59,646,000 hand grenades."

Some of you will remember that at the beginning of World War I distinguished economists declared that the conflict could only be of short duration because no country would be able to finance the formidable cost of protracted hostilities. Yet, no financial problem prevented that war from lasting more than four years.

The war expenditure of 1914/1918 was very heavy, yet it was small in comparison to that of the present conflict. As regards the United States, of which I have summarily described the war effort, and who through its lend-lease deliveries has been financing part of its Allies' war effort, the figures are indeed overwhelming.

The federal budget, which before the war of 1914/1918 hardly exceeded one billion dollars, had reached in the years that preceded the present war approximately 10 billions. But nobody could have sus-

pected that appropriations for the fiscal year 1944 would rise to 113 billion dollars. (For the year 1943 they stood even higher, namely, at 150 billion dollars). So far, the American war budgets have totalled 375 billion dollars.

How has it been possible for the United States to meet such an

expenditure and at the same time avert inflation?

In the first place, through drastic taxation: Federal fiscal revenues assessed at 5-½ billion dollars for 1939 were approximately 44 billions for 1944. I need hardly say that result was achieved not only through increasing the rates of taxation and establishing new taxes, but also thanks to a great increase in the national income which, in turn, was promoted by war expenditure.

However, in the United States as elsewhere, resort to borrowing was unavoidable. Drives were organized every three or four months with the support of a most efficient publicity. The amount at which the Government was aiming was published in advance, quotas being assigned to each state and large city. Local emulation was relied upon to reach and exceed those figures. Cities and villages, and even town sections, were induced to vie with each other. Cinemas, stores, and prominent personalities, were called upon to contribute to the propaganda. In every commercial advertisement you would find the same phrase: "Buy such and such commodity, but buy a War Bond first."

The initial appeal brought in more than 10 billion dollars; subsequent drives more than 20 billion. By July 1944, the Government had already placed nearly 88 billion dollars of War Bonds of various types, of which about 22 billion were subscribed direct by the public. The Sixth issue, in January 1940, brought 21,621 million dollars, exceeding expec-

tations by 54 p. c.

A variety of types of bonds were offered to meet the preferences of the saving public. As in England, the most popular were the War Bonds without coupons, maturing at the end of five to ten years, at a premium equivalent to approximately 2-½% interest. Those bonds are not negotiable but, after six months from their date of issue, the owner can claim reimbursement from the U. S. Treasury. Interest is calculated at a low rate during the initial period. Those who were unable or unwilling to invest \$18.75 for the purchase of a \$25 bond—which was the lowest denomination issued—could buy war stamps of which an adequate number was exchangeable against a Bond.

In addition to those short term securities, 10 or 20 year Bonds were

issued, bearing a maximum interest of 2-1/2%.

With a view to averting a dangerous rise in prices Congress, in September 1942, gave President Roosevelt discretionary powers to fix ceilings for all prices, as also for wages. Prices were stabilized at the September 1942 level, and despite the difficulties you could well imagine, the Government succeeded in limiting the rise in the cost of living to approximately 25 per cent, without there being a sizeable "black market" and despite the fact that the monetary circulation trebled. Since, on the other hand, the supply of commodities was restricted through the substitution of war productions to peace productions, the surplus purchasing power of the American public was naturally diverted towards the purchase of Federal securities. Besides, in many factories the workmen and employees undertook to devote 10 per cent of their earnings to the purchase of War Bonds, and requested the management to make such investments for their account.

As a result of the expansion of industrial activities the national income rose from 76 billion dollars in 1941 to 155 billion in 1944. This increase in purchasing power had no permanent effect on prices because of the increased taxation which I already mentioned—44 billion in 1944 as against 5,600 millions in 1939—and because the public invested in Treasury Bonds, bought houses, or repaid mortgages or other debts.

However, much thought is already being given to the situation that will exist after the war. During the readjustment period, the national income is likely to decline substantially. On the other hand, the public will have amassed some 90 billion dollar savings, and will soon be able to buy cars, radios, household appliances, and especially houses.

Considering this talk is given under the auspices of our universities, some remarks on the American colleges during the war may be appropriate. College life, as you may well suppose, was profoundly disrupted. In the fall of 1943, the number of male students had declined 68.5 p. c., while that of the girl students had increased 75 p. c. The 1702 universities or equivalent institutions were almost entirely under the direction of the Army and Navy. Their courses purported mainly to train officers, military technicians, soldiers and sailors. In 1943, attendants of such courses numbered 145,000, in 227 educational establishments. Where attendance was insufficient, students were recruited from high schools. The object was early enlistment in war services, and the courses were given as speedily as possible.

Some courses, neither military nor civilian, were on special problems to be solved in liberated or conquered countries: foreign languages,

local peculiarities, traffic problems, distribution of water, electricity and gas, public health, etc. Officers of American banks with branches in Europe followed such courses with a view to rendering services in liberated areas.

The most highly developed schools were those of aviation. Hundreds of girls as well as young men learned to fly planes, and subsequently piloted transport and commercial units. In 1938, nearly 21,000 American citizens held a pilot's license. Today there are several hundred thousand.

While the training of students was proceeding at record speed, scientific research was promoted apace. Here again, the war demanded the greatest possible effort.

Apart from military secrets, there have been discoveries of the highest importance. Synthetic quinine for intsance, the use of blood plasma, practical preparation of penicillin and its applications, the mysterious radar, plastics, etc.

The shortening and simplifying of scholastic programs met with strong approval or violent criticism. In the field of university tuition profound readjustments will be necessary. Part of the innovations introduced during the war will be maintained; others will be suppressed. University degrees delivered after only two years of studies may continue to be awarded to students satisfied with a basic training. Post-war problems will arise for demobilized soldiers, many of whom are anxious to complete their studies, or to take them up from the beginning. There can be no doubt that an unprecedented desire for higher learning has developed. It is estimated that some three million young men and women will wish to enter a university immediately after the war. Some degrees awarded under war conditions will require to be reviewed, or more exactly supplemented. Thus, a record number of medical doctors has been turned out for the needs of the Forces without the usual training as hospital assistants.

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A problem foremost in the mind of Americans is that of employment for men and women released from the Armed Forces or from other war work. Some 67 million soldiers and workers must be refitted into civilian jobs.

Working hours can of course be shortened. Several million men and women will take a rest. Others will return to their schools, and others again will remain in the Army. Yet, there will be an arduous problem to solve before production and distribution are reorganized so as to

avoid unemployment, that nightmare which, in the United States as elsewhere, haunts the Government and the people.

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Those who go to the United States on a short visit after having spent the past few years in Europe, are inclined to think that it has been little affected by the war. Everything, or almost everything, appears to them to be much as it was before the war. Its cities are undamaged: no bombs have touched them; its factories are working at full capacity. There is a dim-out only in a few cities close to the coast. People in the streets show no excitement, are well clothed, and go about in a healthy and peaceful atmosphere which looks perfectly normal. But somewhat closer scrutiny will soon reveal the intensity and magnitude of the war effort. While our own existence has felt the upheaval of war, enemy occupation and liberation, the United States has experienced a hardly lesser revolution—the effects of which will be long felt in its financial, economic and social conditions.

Apart from its increased equipment and the extension of governmental management, the American people has accepted discipline, restrictions and sacrifices as never before. Military needs have a first call on the transportation systems, which are overburdened with the incessant flow of troops, munitions and military equipment. Time tables for passenger trains are frequently modified, services suspended, and arrivals delayed. Coaches are crowded with soldiers, people going to their war work, women and children transferring their homes in order to be nearer to the new factories where their husbands and fathers are working. An extraordinary number of women and girls are doing office work, notably in the vast governmental agencies established during the war. Families are dispersed, with all the inconveniences and dangers inherent in such separations.

There is marked shortage of medical doctors and nurses for the civilian population in view of the attendance required by the Armed Forces and the returning wounded. Hospitals are seriously short-handed, and they resort to the voluntary services of assistants hastily trained by the Red Cross.

You can imagine what it means in a country where a car was regarded as practically indispensable for normal living—there was one car to four inhabitants—to find gasoline severely rationed, and the use of cars restricted. The Detroit works which turned out 5 million cars a year

were entirely converted for the production of war material. Gas coupons, difficult to obtain and only for specified purposes, implied a first limitation to the use of cars. Then tires were rendered unobtainable to all who could not justify a use immediately connected with the war effort. Furthermore car owners were obliged to deliver their spare tires to the Government with the exception of one per car. Personally I had to comply with that rule. I may add that in order to obtain gas coupons it was necessary to show that the car would be used to carry other persons on some useful errand. Each car owner was expected to share his car with neighbors.

Out of the 32 million cars which the United States counted before the war, only 18 million remain in circulation for civilian requirements, and many are badly worn.

Restrictions imposed on people accustomed to travel freely in cities and in the countryside, where distances are so much greater than with us, have of course been felt acutely, Holiday travel, week-end excursions have been suppressed. True, you may say that those are not tragic hardships. Nevertheless they indicate a profound change in the way of living of the American people unaccustomed to any restrictions.

Since 1940, and particularly since the Lend-Lease Act was passed, the United States was manufacturing large quantities of war material for Britain, but there were no restrictions to the normal peace-time manufactures. In 1941, the output of typewriters was one million and a half; of refrigerators three million and a half, although 50,000 machine-guns were already being manufactured for the British Forces. One month after Pearl Harbor, the manufacture of typewriters and refrigerators was suspended entirely, as was that of all domestic electrical appliances: cooking apparatus, ventilators, heaters, flat irons, etc. The manufacture of bed springs, egg-beaters, washing machines, in short of all those things which make life so easy to the American housewife, was equally suppressed. Similarly, safety razors were no longer produced. Yet, all things told, the restrictions placed on the use of cars were those the people felt most keenly.

Meat, butter, cheese, fats, sugar, and canned goods are rationed, and rationing grows more and more severe, In January 1945, three times as many stamps as initially were required for buying one pound of butter, and twice as many for a pound of cheese. Shoes are rationed at the rate of two pairs per annum. Silk hose and lingerie have disappeared from the market. Nylon, formerly used for women's stockings, is allocated exclusively to the manufacture of parachutes. The yardage of ready-made

clothing has been reduced by order of the Government. Clothes are shorter, with less pockets. Men's pants were to be made without cuffs.

The Government and public are striving for the best utilization of rationed commodities. There have been thousands of lectures on the subject in towns, villages and clubs throughout the country.

The use of fuel oil for heating private dwellings is limited, and this measure caused serious difficulties in view of the large number of houses and apartments where that mode of heating was installed. There is practically no black market, thanks largely to the control which the public itself is exercising.

Public amusements also suffered restrictions. Thus horse-racing was entirely suspended. Recently a midnight curfew was instituted for cafés, restaurants, picture theaters, and places of amusement in general. New York's great avenues no longer displayed their famous electric signs.

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Overshadowing all that great effort and the inconveniences of those restrictions, there has hung over millions of families a constant anxiety for their loved ones fighting or about to fight for the glory and the very life of the United States; a fight carried on for our liberty also, by land, by sea and in the air, in the Pacific, in Germany, in France, in Italy, and in the Low Countries, in the Aleutian Islands, India, Burma, after triumphant campaigns in Africa and Sicily, on those many battlefields of which we remember the names with emotion because they are so many landmarks on the road to our liberation.

Do not misunderstand me. I am by no means attempting to draw a parallel between life in the United States and conditions in Europe. My object is merely to illustrate how the American people—the whole people, including civilians, men and women, young and old—is participating in the war effort with energy and courage. Although the war is being waged far from its shores, it shares in the sufferings of the friends and Allies of the United States, and those sufferings re-echo in its heart and steel its will.

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In addition to the financial contribution for which the war loans appealed, a number of charitable institutions were collecting funds from the public. The American Red Cross, gathered in two drives 60 and 95 million dollars. UNRRA made an appeal for used clothing, and 270 tons of the large quantity which it collected are going to Belgium. Next April another drive is expected to yield 70,000 tons for the needy

populations of Europe, and Belgium again will receive a substantial share. Private charities made up innumerable parcels, suits and knitted articles of clothing for the war prisoners in Germany, and for the first needs of liberated areas.

The American Red Cross instituted a special service for the collection of human blood, offered voluntarily for the wounded soldiers. It gathered more than nine million pints. In many places queues of blood donors could be seen waiting to respond to that appeal.

I know that the German press has published a number of articles describing, with its usual exaggeration, differences that have risen between employers and workers in mines and war works. Nobody would deny in the United States that such disputes have occurred. There, as in other countries, this was part of the price that must be paid for that inestimable asset called Liberty.

In the intensified effort accepted by the American people there were perforce mistakes to be corrected, improvements to be introduced as work was speeded up. Yet, there have been merely local frictions in areas over-populated through the influx of workers. In their vast majority the American workers have faithfully observed the "no strike" order issued by the President. The total number of hours lost through strikes never exceeded one-thousandth of the working hours.

Nothing again gives a better idea of the manner in which American democracy operated during the war than the following facts, unparalleled in any other of the nations participating in the war, namely: the fact that elections have taken place at their normal dates, for state legislatures, for Congress and the Senate, and for the Presidency of the United States. Truly a magnificent example of order and observance of the Law.

I am not endeavoring to draw for you a picture of perfection which our American friends would be the first to consider too flattering; but what makes a people great at a given hour of its history is the population viewed as a whole—its elite and its many of humble condition, individually of no conspictuous merits—a population able, when an emergency or the call of its country prompts it, to give its best for the common good. Anyone who views the American people as a whole cannot but be impressed by its gigantic, generous and tenacious collective effort, which was inspired not by a fever of war, but rather by a very noble and conscious enthusiasm for the greatness of a nation that knows its power and has the will to deserve and uphold it.

## THE UNITED STATES AND BELGIUM

Already before the war the attitude of the United States towards Belgium was most sympathetic. King Albert, Cardinal Mercier, Burgomaster Max were still widely remembered. Thousands of American citizens had contributed money or services to the Commission for Relief in Belgium, which was so helpful in supplying our country during World War I. Belgium had been, in August 1914, the first victim of German aggression and had bravely defended herself. She had cooperated valiantly in a victory in which many American soldiers were proud to feel that the United States had taken a great part.

The second invasion of her soil on May 10, 1940, aroused indignation in the United States and a new wave of sympathy for our little country assailed twice within a generation by German perfidy.

Then came the debacle. The manner in which European broadcasts and the press accounted for it puzzled our American friends. They could not realize what had happened, and information from foreign sources was attempting to lay on Belgium almost the entire blame for the disaster. The technical reasons of German victory were unknown, and the astounding speed of German successes appeared inexplicable.

But after a time, the surrender of France's mighty armies, and the general march of events enabled a better comprehension of the ordeal Belgium had undergone, and of the weight of arms that had overwhelmed her. Unjust and hasty judgments were corrected. It became known that while the Belgian people and its king were prisoners, faith in the resurrection of the nation remained unshaken. The Belgian Government spared no endeavor to spread the truth. It caused books and pamphlets on the 1940 campaign to be published and widely distributed, so as to show that, after a gallant military resistance, occupied Belgium remained in the fight without despairing of her future, and under the heel of the enemy was struggling for freedom, in darkness, with admirable courage and tenacity.

We published a weekly—"News from Belgium"—and an illustrated monthly review—"Belgium"—which were well received. Let me quote two examples of the sympathy shown us by prominent Americans.

The Belgian Government had sent to the United States some pictures of the old Flemish School for the New York World's Fair. Circumstances had made it impossible to return them to Belgium. With those pictures, and a few others lent us by American collectors and museums, we made a small exhibition. Mrs. Roosevelt, of whose indefatigable

and generous activity you have heard, expressed a wish to open the show in New York especially since it was given for the benefit of Belgian charities.

And here is the second instance. You certainly remember the proclamation which Burgomaster van de Meulebroeck posted on the walls of Brussels when the Germans expelled him from the Town Hall. We had that proclamation reproduced as an illustration of the proud resistance which the municipal authorities of Belgium were offering the invaders. We succeeded in interesting New York's dynamic Mayor, Mr. LaGuardia, in that episode, and on July 21, 1942, he organized a ceremony in honor of Belgium at New York's City Hall. Belgian official personalities were invited and fetched in state in municipal cars at their homes. Mr. LaGuardia, since 1934 the spokesman of that gigantic city of more than 7 million inhabitants, gave a moving address which was broadcast over the municipal system. He extolled the protests of the Burgomaster of Brussels and other Belgian public servants, giving them as an example to the world, and placing our country on the Roll of Honor of the United Nations.

## RELIEF IN BELGIUM

Relief in Belgium could not be organized as it had been during World War I, although the matter was constantly in the mind of the Belgian Government and its friends, and they spared no effort to obtain at least partial satisfaction. Circumstances were different, but we met with many sympathies, both active and generous. As soon as liberation was in sight a number of charitable institutions set out to assist our population in need. A special tribute must be paid the American Red Cross, who enabled the Belgian Government, after great initial difficulties, to establish regular shipments of food parcels to Belgian war prisoners in Germany.

Belgium proper was not forgotten. "Friends of Belgium," "Parcels for Belgian Prisoners," "Belgians in Britain," all three members of the "Belgian War Relief Society" (who has a correspondent in Belgium), and great clubs, such as that of the Kiwanis, collected and are sending us hundreds of tons of clothing, vitamins, soap, X-ray apparatus for the detection of tuberculosis, etc. While only some sections of the Belgian community can see what is coming from the United States and are in a position to realize what efforts are made to provide help, the homeless, the evacuees, the refugees, the infants' aid societies in the areas which

have particularly suffered, are beginning to receive valuable succor from American generosity. Lecturers, speaking all over the United States with the assistance of American friends, have made the situation in Belgium widely known, and appealed for help. Of the welcome they have received let me cite only one example. The wife of a professor of Brussels University has with untiring devotion given a series of lectures at American colleges and high-schools. At the girls' University of Michigan she received a donation of 1500 sweaters, and when a few days later she mentioned that generous response in a talk at the University of Illinois, she added "I am sure you will want to do as well as or better than Michigan." This brought a gift of 2500 sweaters. A small instance among many, but illustrative of the widespread and spontaneous generosity which the American public has shown towards our countrymen.

We must not forget that in this war Belgium was not Germany's only victim. France, Holland, Norway, Greece, Poland, Yugoslavia, and Denmark were, and are, equally in need of help, to say nothing of the countries which have suffered the heaviest losses—Britain, Russia, and China.

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Finally there has been the valuable assistance which the Belgian Congo has received at the hands of the United States.

The whole of Belgium was occupied, and no substantial aid could be given before she was liberated. Already in 1940 we were able to resort to the United States for the equipment of the Congo Forces, whose part in the Abyssinian Campaign I need not recall. Then we turned to the United States for the vital requirements of the Belgian Congo and its 14,000,000 inhabitants severed from their customary sources of supply. During the war almost one-half of the Congo's imports were derived from the United States, for an average annual value of about 1 billion francs. Those imports were indispensable for the needs of the white population; for the supply of trade goods, notably textiles, required by the Negro population; for the equipment of the transportation systems, mines and factories, which, as you know, furnished considerable quantities of strategic commodities to the Allies. It should be remembered that what the Belgian Congo needed was exactly of those types of materials, goods and machinery for which other countries-notably our Allies-were clamoring. Every Belgian established in the Congo will tell you how important, and indeed how vital, those American supplies have proved. They are due to the goodwill and understanding attitude of the American Administration.

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Belgians have been and still are astounded at the sight of American war equipment; its diversity and quality, its magnificent conception. In a country such as ours, twice invaded and occupied, and again as recently as December last threatened with a new and devastating assault, attention readily centers on the battles which delivered and protected our soil. But those American boys who pass through our streets, strong, smiling, their hands in their pockets, are the same as those who are fighting heroically amid Pacific jungles in a merciless struggle. When we look at them let us remember that they have travelled thousands of miles in order to liberate our little country, which is hardly more than a dot on the map of the world. Had they not understood the value of the ideal they are pursuing, had they only seen narrow and material interests in this war, no force could have induced them to come to the rescue of such a small and distant people, and fight and die for us.

Would there have been many among us ready to risk their lives at the other end of the world for a country whose name they hardly knew, and which they had never seen, unless a feeling of sublime generosity had lighted the flame of enthusiasm in their hearts? Those young men who came from the rocky coast of the Atlantic, from the sunny shores of the Pacific, from the forests, fields and mountains of the United States, understood that they were out to save a civilization which was their own, a liberty, a respect for human personality, without which their lives, as ours, would not be worth living. Their cause and ours are essentially inseparable.

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I must apologize for what could only be a somewhat rambling talk. Obviously it was impossible to sum up in the space of one hour the history of America at war, and adequately describe the feverish existence during the past five years of 132 million people, fundamentally pacific, but suddenly drawn into a fight—and what a fight—without preparation; called upon to build up practically from nothing its officers corps, its army, its navy, its military equipment. I have merely endeavored to give you a series of pictures illustrating the most characteristic traits of the American outlook, industrial effort and military achievements, with their reactions on the lives of the citizens of the United States.

I shall be happy if you will retain from my remarks an impression of an immense effort, so great that even in America it appeared impossible to accomplish, yet necessary in its every aspect, in arms, men, air power, navy, merchant marine, equipment, motor vehicles, guns and munitions, in order that the United States and its Allies bring Germany to unconditional surrender. Without our American friends it could not have been achieved.

I have no thought of belittling the tremendous exertions, the splendid and moving valor, of Britain and her Dominions, who stood alone for more than a year with heroic determination; nor the immense sacrifices of the gallant Russian Armies. Nobody could admire and respect them more than I do. But since the United States is my topic today, let me stress that without its intervention, courage and power, Lord knows when and how victory could have been attained.

What I should like my remarks to convey to you particularly is an expression of the profound gratitude which I feel we all owe the citizens of the United States, and in particular its soldiers and sailors, who left their homes, their native environments, to come to this our troubled Europe, ready to give their blood and their lives in order to liberate it from the abominable Nazi regime. Our gratitude must go especially to those 930,000 Americans who were reported killed, wounded or missing up to April last, of which 425,000 were casualties in Europe between D-Day and February; and how many have fallen since . . .

And to conclude, let me say once more with what gratitude and admiration we remember the man who, with a splendid vision of the essential interests of his country, was able to inspire the American nation, exalt its faith and its will, and lead it in the accomplishment of its noble duty to the world and to that principle of liberty which gives the democratic ideal its highest human value.

Let us all bow respectfully before the memory of him whom the most prominent spokesmen of all nations have praised for his lofty mind, strong character and civic virtues, the noble Head of the great country whose Star Spangled Banner symbolizes faithful attachment to an ideal, in unity and liberty, that great man who died for the United States, for the freedom of the world and for the resurrection of Belgium, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.